**Acts 13:1**

\*The aftermath of another persecution of the Jerusalem Baptist Church brought blessings upon Baptists

as *“the word of God”* (13x) grew with *“free course”* (cf. II Thes. 3:1) with the escape of Peter and death of Herod. In the meantime, Barnabas and Saul delivered the offering to the Jerusalem church and returned to Antioch with John Mark (Acts 12:24-25). The Lord blessed JBC with finances and freedom!

\*The Lord shifted the movement of the Great Commission to the second great church, Antioch Baptist Church, loaded with experienced servants (c. AD 46) with the targets of Cyprus and Asia.

\*Apostles, prophets, and teachers (cf. Eph. 4:11) built up the assembly, including Barnabas (Shemite), Simeon Niger (Hamite), Lucius of Cyrene (Hamite), Manaen (Shemite), and Saul (Shemite). They gave seminary level instruction, and did not just teach the doctrine of church planting they were willing to practice it. No empire building here!

**Acts 13:2**

\*These active church ministers purposefully re-located from Jerusalem, Tarsus, Africa, etc., to Antioch for the propagation of Gospel truth around the known world.

\*As they were involved in the church service teaching and fasting, the Holy Ghost *“said”* (probably through a prophet preaching the Great Commission!) *“Separate* (to) *me Barnabas and Saul.”* The Lord selected two men by name for a specific field. The specific will of God is known through the Word in the church service by the Spirit (cf. Acts 9:15-19)!

\*The specific *“work whereunto I have called them”* was the Great Commission of evangelism, baptism, and catechism or CHURCH PLANTING! He did not call them to be merely “soul winners” or to start “para-church” ministries, but to start independent and autonomous churches like the Antioch and Jerusalem Baptist Churches! The only unity these churches would have would be around church truth.

**Acts 13:3**

\*The calling and sending of these two *“apostles”* (Acts 14:14) was spiritual and simple! The assembly had *“fasted and prayed”* (cf. Neh. 1:4), laid hands on (cf. Acts 6:6), and sent them out (also v. 4).

\*Scripture gives principles for church planting. 1) “Missionaries” were called and sent from the membership of Baptist assemblies. 2) They had been proven as faithful church members. 3) They were approved by the assembly after prayer and fasting. 4) They started autonomous churches and reported back to home church. 5) The ABC had resources (Acts 11:29-30) but chose not to support financially (Phil. 4:15-17). Paul financed himself and Barnabas probably used personal wealth (cf. 4:36-37). 6) The ABC was the “Mission Agency.” 7) The plan was to start house churches; they did not need “church buildings” to have a church! 8) The churches they planted were to be Self-Governing, Self-Financing, and Self-Evangelizing (the “3-Selfs”). 9) Paul and Barnabas trained nationals to start churches in foreign lands. 10) The Antioch Baptist Church nor her missionaries “owned” the churches they started, nor the property, nor the building facilities.

\*The Book of Acts gives Two Models for church planting. 1) The First Model is the Persecution Model in the Case Study of Philip who left Jerusalem because of persecution and started a church in his home with his family (Acts 8:5 ff.). The Second Model is the Purposeful Model in the Case Study of the Antioch Baptist Church purposefully, planning, and planting Baptist assemblies in locations, meeting immediately in homes of believers. Para-church Bible colleges, seminaries, and mission boards have no biblical authority to train, ordain, expect support, or send out missionaries, nor to plant churches!

**Acts 13:4**

\*Who sent out Barnabas and Saul for Baptist church planting? The Scripture is clear that the Holy Ghost sent out the church planters through the instrumentality of the members of the Antioch Baptist Church. The Lord’s Baptist assemblies work in harmony with Heaven (Mt. 16:18-19; 18:15-20).

\*The duo went 16 miles west to the Syrian city Seleucia (“white light”) and then on to the homeland of Barnabas (Acts 4:26). As Saul had a burden for his homeland of Tarsus so likewise Barnabas for his people. The First Missionary Journey started about AD 46.

**Acts 13:5**

\*Luke gave basic details concerning the major city of Salamis (“salt”) on east end of Cyprus, where they preached the word of God in Synagogues to the Jews, and had the nephew of Barnabas, John Mark, who joined the Antioch Baptist Church and had gone with them. He may have had the proclivity to evangelize Gentiles since his Gospel was directed toward them (Mk. 7:1-5).

**Acts 13:6-7**

\*The trio went to the west end of Cyprus and continued the Great Commission in the large city Paphos (“boiling”). Their practice was to start churches in major cities and then have them reach out to surrounding areas. Here, archeology discovered the statue of Venus, called *Paphian Venus*. This place was teeming with demon-possessed sorcerers such as this *magos* (cf. II Cor. 4:4). They encountered the first satanic hindrance (cf. I Thes. 2:18) in the Jewish false prophet named *Bar-Jesus* (“Son of Joshua”).

\*The false prophet associated himself with the deputy of the country Sergius Paulus, no doubt hoping to influence the populace with occultism. Sergius was a *“prudent”* (*sunetos* > wise) who wanted to hear the word of God from the missionaries. Leaders like Herod Antipas wanted to hear Jesus (Lk. 23:8).

**Acts 13:8**

\*Another fact about the sorcerer was his other name *Elymas* (“powerful”) as Luke focused on double names (Sergius Paulus and Saul Paul). He *“withstood”* (imperfect tense [cf. II Tim. 3:8]) the missionaries, not wanting to lose his devotee/money to the Christian faith (Jude 1:11; II Pet. 2:15).

**Acts 13:9-11**

\*At this critical time in the history of the evangelization of the Gentile world in Asia and Europe, Satan threw his best/worst opponent at the called and commissioned missionaries. The spiritual battle was set in array; true prophet against false prophet! Paul was filled with the Holy Ghost (Eph. 5:18); Elymas was full of subtilty and mischief. The Lord’s man, means, and message was ready for spiritual warfare.

\*With eyes, mouth, and heart ready, Paul scathingly denounced Satan’s man as a *“child of the devil”* and “*enemy of all righteousness”* who perverted *“the right ways of the Lord.”*His last assertion was in the form of a question as a rebuke but also as a final call for repentance.

\*With the *“discerning of spirits”* (I Cor. 12:10), Paul imprecated Elymas with the curse of the judgmental *“hand of the Lord”* upon him for precise but limited judgment (see Acts 9:8-18).

\*His physical blindness typified his spiritual blindness. Immediately he was engulfed with *“a mist”* (II Pet. 2:17) and *“a darkness.”* The gracious Lord gave Elymas a foretaste of his eternal future if no repentance: *“But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth”* (Mt. 8:12), including unquenchable fire (Mk. 9:43-48).

**Acts 13:12**

\*The deputy believed the Lord’s doctrine, having seen the miracle judgment (Jn. 20:30; II Cor. 12:12).